



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH
building community • equipping believers • serving Jesus



SMYRNA SCROLL

PASTOR'S CORNER

April 2026

Dates to Remember

- * 1st - No Wednesday activities - Spring Break
- * 3rd - Good Friday Service @ 7:00 PM
- * 5th - Easter Sunday - schedule on back page
- * 11th - Churchwide Work Day @ 8:30 AM
- * 15th - Semi-Annual Business Meeting @ 6:30 PM
- * 16th - Pastor's Book Club at Smyrna - 11:30 AM
- * Kids Volunteers Appreciation Lunch at Scott family farm - 11 AM-2 PM

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Our God is truly an awesome God. Do you believe this? At Smyrna, we affirm that God is in control of all things. We talk often about the greatness of God and, in so doing, we typically use the term "Sovereignty". The Sovereignty of God denotes the fact that God is in control of all things. He is the God of salvation and politics and nature and so on. He is a vast God who orchestrates all things in accordance with His will and purpose.

These truths are precious and biblical, but they can be twisted if we are not careful. One of the ways that we can warp God's Word is when we infer that God's Sovereignty somehow skews our responsibility. I have met several Christians who would say that God is in control of all things, therefore they see no reason to share their faith. The reason, they claim, is that God can redeem all He desires and, therefore, there is no cause for their obedience.

My assumption is that most of you don't feel this way, but I do want to remind you that the God of the Bible gives us a very important purpose and responsibility to play in His unfolding plan of redemption. Christ rose on the third day and, shortly thereafter, He appeared to His disciples commanding them to "make disciples of all nations..." What does this entail? Well, the obvious starting point is evangelism! Christ is literally telling His disciples to go and share their faith (see Acts 1:8 as well). Why would a Sovereign God use people to fulfill His purpose of salvation in the world? We don't have the answer to that question, at least not totally, but that should not alter the fact that we have clear instructions from the Lord as to what we should be busy doing! It is not our job to answer every question we have; it is our job to be faithful to what God has clearly commanded. As J.I. Packer so eloquently stated, "God did not teach us the reality of His rule in order to give us an excuse for neglecting His orders."

What does this have to do with Easter? One connection I would make for you is that Easter provides a great opportunity for us to share our faith and invite others to worship with us in church. We live in a culture that still holds some small vestiges of the Christian heritage that used to be strong. This means that we are surrounded by people who feel the obligation to go to church on Easter Sunday. Many of them have little concept of the Gospel and no affection for Christ but they are open to the need to worship somewhere at least once per year and this provides a great opportunity for us to trust that a Sovereign God could use our efforts to invite people to hear

His Word who may well be saved by His plan.

Folks, its not your job to discern whom God might save, it is your job (and my job) to share the truth with as many as possible. Capitalize on the open door! Take the uncomfortable step of inviting your friends and talking about Jesus with your family members during this Easter season. My assumption is that you will see God move in and through you to accomplish His Sovereign, and good will!

Blessings,
Pastor Aaron
abobo@smyrna1897.org



A MESSAGE FROM ROBERT ROWLAND, EXECUTIVE PASTOR OF CARE

Dear Smyrna Family,

Twenty-two years ago, a pastor and scholar by the name of Mark Dever wrote a book entitled, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. I thought about this book recently because as the pastoral staff and a few others had the privilege of attending *Coram Deo*, a pastor's conference near Charlotte, NC., I was reminded of how important church health is and that many congregations are not. The question that begs to be asked is, "Are we?"

As your pastors, we hold Mark Dever in high esteem. He provides in his book 9 markers by which we can measure our health. This will of course require honesty and an accurate sense of self-awareness. I want to share these with you today not in order to brag but to create in us a sense of gratitude and excitement for the privilege God has given us here at Smyrna Baptist. This is not simply about your pastors; this is an assessment of all of us. So, what is "success" for a church of the Lord Jesus Christ? What does it mean for a church to be faithful? We certainly cannot base success or faithfulness solely on how many people are attending. If that were the case, Joel Osteen would be a model of success, and we believe he is an absolute heretic.

I believe personally that the local church is God's evangelism plan. It is His means through which the Great Commission is to be fulfilled. The local church is where missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and disciples of Christ are nurtured, strengthened, trained, and sent out. It is of the utmost importance that congregations get it right because we are a major means to God's ends. So, what are the 9 marks of a healthy church according to Mark Dever?

He begins with expository preaching. This is what we do here. This type of preaching is that which takes for the point of the sermon the point of a particular text. We attempt to expose the truth of what a particular passage of God's Word is saying. Another mark is what is referred to as biblical theology. In this discipline we adhere to the overarching biblical truths that tie creation, the fall, redemption, and the consummation all together. We see the beautiful scarlet thread of redemption running through the Bible from beginning to end and understand Scripture in light of this Truth. Mark #3 is that the gospel is taught and advanced in healthy churches. Fourth, we maintain a biblical understanding of conversion and fifthly a biblical understanding of evangelism which leads to the sixth mark which Dever defines as meaningful

A MESSAGE FROM ROBERT ROWLAND, CONTINUED

membership.

When membership matters, church discipline will be a part of a healthy church too, which Dever defines as his 7th mark of a healthy church. The reason membership matters and church discipline is practiced is because the 8th mark, which is concern for discipleship and growth, is paramount. It is not okay in a healthy church for “newborns” in the faith to stay infants forever. A healthy congregation expects, promotes, and makes possible spiritual growth through its discipleship efforts. The last mark Dever mentions is biblical leadership. There are standards for pastors, deacons, teachers, and servants in the body of Christ.

Dear church family, I invite you to consider how we stack up against these 9 marks of a healthy church. I for one feel so thankful to be a part of what I consider a healthy church. We are so thankful for each of you and your commitment to the Lord and His bride. We love you all!

Devotedly,
Pastor Robert

**FROM THE DESK OF DANIEL WATSON, PASTORAL RESIDENT**

Last month I had the opportunity to attend the Coram Deo conference that was held at Kevin DeYoung's church, in North Carolina. It was the first time I have gone to this particular conference. Pastor Aaron, Pastor Robert, myself, our wives and a few other couples from church enjoyed a few days of special instruction and worship at this conference. It was an informative, encouraging and enriching time that we had together.

The worship was wonderful to experience. Hearing rich biblical truths being sung boldly and powerfully throughout the sanctuary was one of my favorite parts of the conference. We sang some old familiar hymns and new ones too. The song, “To You My Life Belongs” is a brand-new song that has a great chorus that reminds me of some of the great work Jesus has done for us. Here are the words, “Deliverer and rescuer, the ransom for my wrongs; beloved lover of my soul, to you my life belongs.” I love learning new songs that are true and are set to a good tune; this hymn is one of those. Hearing it performed live, with hundreds of other people, reverberated truth around the sanctuary and motivated us to sing with strong passion to Jesus our King.

Besides the preaching and lecture sessions, music, discussions over meals about what we were learning and multiple trips through the bookstore, our fellowship together reminded me of the privilege I have to be a part of our Smyrna family. Our nights after the conference sessions were filled with incredible amounts of laughter. I loved the balance and blend of truth and enjoying one another's company that our days were filled with. What we regularly experience at Smyrna, we took with us to the conference; fellowship and living life together. I am so grateful for my Smyrna family and being able to walk with Jesus, with you.

Sincerely,
Daniel Watson
dwatson@smyrna1897.org

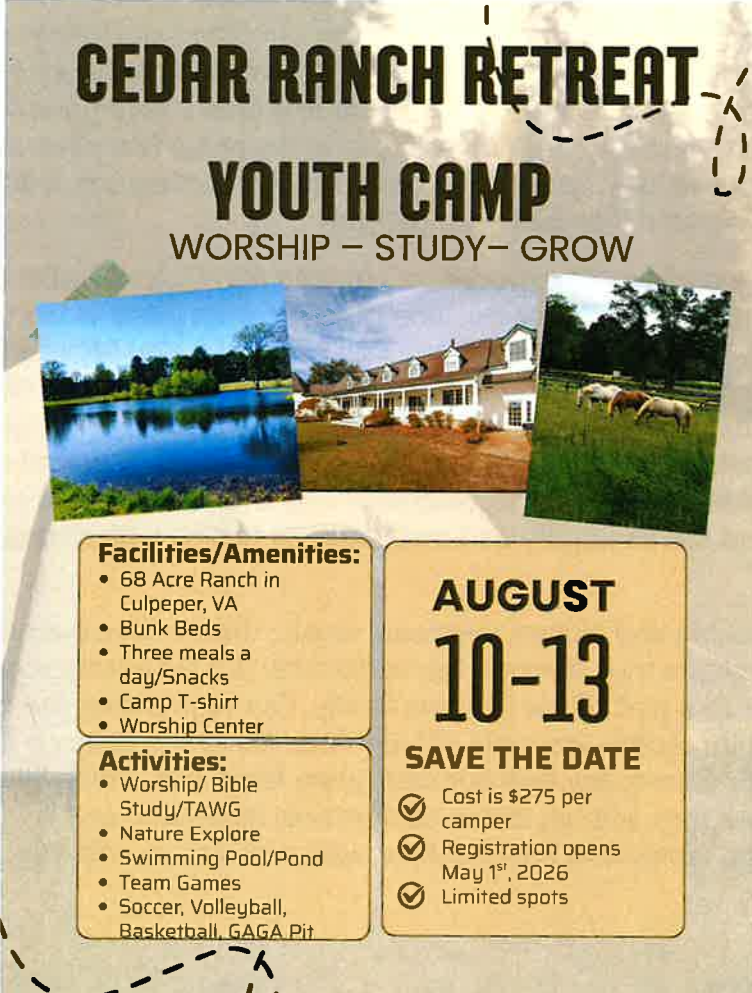
YOUTH

Several years ago, our student ministry stopped attending any summer camp. The reason for this decision was simply faithfulness. We were not pleased with both the environment and the biblical foundation of the teaching we received. It has always been our biggest goal and priority to disciple our students to faithfulness and holiness, and we felt as if we were forced to compromise to continue in the camp circuit.

Nevertheless, there remained a desire to see our students enjoy time together and, most importantly, time around the Word of God in a camp setting and this gave birth to a new venture. In 2026, Smyrna will be hosting our very own summer camp! Aimee Kennedy has faithfully and tirelessly worked to secure a camp that will provide all of the logistical necessities (food, lodging, activities, etc.) while also allowing us to format and lead our very own worship services. This means that camp will combine all of the beautiful things we desire while allowing us to avoid all that was unappealing and even potentially harmful.

I look forward to preaching at camp and we are excited about the time we get to spend with one another as we enjoy fellowship and games and time around the Word. Information (dates, cost, etc.) is listed for you below. Registration will begin on 5/1 and we hope your student will join us!

Blessings,
Pastor Aaron



CEDAR RANCH RETREAT
YOUTH CAMP
WORSHIP – STUDY – GROW

Facilities/Amenities:

- 68 Acre Ranch in Culpeper, VA
- Bunk Beds
- Three meals a day/Snacks
- Camp T-shirt
- Worship Center

Activities:

- Worship/ Bible Study/TAWG
- Nature Explore
- Swimming Pool/Pond
- Team Games
- Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, GAGA Pit

AUGUST 10-13

SAVE THE DATE

- ✓ Cost is \$275 per camper
- ✓ Registration opens May 1st, 2026
- ✓ Limited spots

REGISTRATION
OPENS
MAY 1ST



This month I would like to focus on the church's participation in singing during the worship service and on a personal level as well. I recently read an article from The Gospel Coalition titled, "Help! I Don't Like My Church's Music" by Ryanne Molinari. The title caught my attention. Even though I don't hear many, if any, complaints from our church family, I'm sure there are times you as a worshiper don't like a particular song. Sometimes that just comes from not knowing the song. We attempt to repeat a new song often in the beginning to help us learn the song. There are multiple ways for you to be familiar with a song prior to coming to worship. The newsletter is one way. When I know we'll be introducing a new song in that particular month, I will put the title/titles in the newsletter article. You can simply search for the title in whatever streaming platform you use. Also, you can find each Sunday's worship set on **Spotify**. Search for **Smyrna Sunday Playlist**. It is usually updated on Mondays or Tuesdays for the following Sunday. There are other instances that the style of the song just might not be your taste in music. In church music, we place scriptural faithfulness over musical styles. Most of the time, our style is pretty even or consistent. We strive to have a balance of songs styles from traditional to modern and in between. In Ryanne's article, she writes, "We're all called to sing and to lift our voices in wholehearted worship, regardless of the style. When we don't immediately or constantly like our church's music, we need to commit to participation, preparation, and perseverance. In doing so, we can go beyond musical style to more deeply grasp the heart of worship."

In our culture it is counterintuitive to listen to songs that we don't like or are unfamiliar with. Personalized playlists condition us to treat music as a matter of our own preferences. Ryanne further states, "Scripture is clear that music is meant to knit us together (Eph. 5:19-21; Col. 3:16-17). Especially in the church, music isn't primarily about individual consumption but communal participation." As Pastor Aaron recently stated at the end of one of our services recently, something like this, "I believe we are becoming a singing church!" That's "music" to my ears and more importantly it shows obedience to the Lord's command in scripture and is a sweet aroma to our Lord! Ligon Duncan states, "The command to sing is the most frequently repeated command in all of Scripture." There are over 400 references to singing in the Bible both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. God has let us know singing is an integral part of our worship!

Smyrna family, it is a joy for the worship ministry to lead you each week in worship and we are so encouraged by the continued growth both musically and spiritually as we gather each Lord's Day!

Singing His Praises,
Melodie Parsons

"Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; make melody to Him with the harp of ten strings! Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully on the strings with loud shouts." Psalm 33:1-3



Hello Families,

April brings us to one of the most meaningful times of the year — Easter.

In Children's Ministry, this is such a special season. Over the next few weeks, our focus is helping children understand not just what happened, but why it matters. The story of Jesus' death and resurrection is at the center of our faith, and we have the privilege of sharing that truth in ways that are meaningful and age-appropriate for every child.

You may start to hear pieces of this at home — questions, thoughts, or simple retellings of the story. These moments are so valuable. Even small conversations can help deepen understanding and make faith feel real and personal.

April can also be full. Spring schedules pick up, activities increase, and weekends fill quickly. In the middle of all that, thank you for continuing to make space for church. The consistency of showing up helps children feel connected, grounded, and reminded of God's love week after week.

We are especially looking forward to celebrating our incredible Children's Ministry volunteers on April 18 with a Spring Carnival-themed appreciation day—complete with fun, yummy food, and time together to simply enjoy and celebrate all they pour into this ministry. Volunteers, please take a moment to register so we can prepare well for you and make the day as special as possible.

As we move toward Easter, my prayer is simple — that each of our children would know they are deeply loved, not just by us, but by a Savior who gave everything for them.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your family's faith journey.

With gratitude,

Erica Chaplin

echaplin@smyrna1897.org



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			NO EVENING ACTIVITIES - SPRING BREAK Mackenzie Davis Chris Day	2	3 Good Friday Service @ 7:00 PM 	4 Nichole Kidd
5  Hope Lane Terri Shell	6 OFFICE CLOSED Janice Bain Charlotte Burkes Doug Sheppard	7	8 Hailey McCoig	9 Patrick Antkowiak	10	11
12 Brooke Bishop John Costley Aaron Healy Kate Tucker	13 Pamela Reynolds	14 Grayson Demaline	15 Semi-Annual Business Mtg @ 6:30 PM Christine Marston Rhylee Ann McCoig Monica Shifflett	16 Chase Bradley Grace Davis Huntus Duke April Foster Leah Pierce Rebecca Shell	17 Lesly McBride	18 Kids Volunteer Appreciation Lunch 11AM-2PM Lucas Servis
19 Wayne Slayden	20 Jonas Burkes Elijah Servis	21 April Green Jaeda Rich	22 Becky Burkes Trisha Johnson Judah Servis	23 Rudy Etheredge, Jr. Laura Foley Micah Williamson	24 Floyd Crocker Kenneth Droddy Rachael Tucker	25 Lily Perkinson Beth Smith
26	27 Deacon's Meeting @ 6:30 PM Turner Miller Callie Mize Steve Shoemaker	28 Aimee Kennedy	29 David McAlpine Amy Mizzell Cadence Taylor	30 Randy Driggers Rachel Zimmerman		



WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE

- 5:30-6:15 - Dinner
- 6:00 - 6:30 - Kidz Choir
- 6:30 - 7:30 - Mid-Week Bible Study
- 6:30 - 8:00 - AWANA, Youth & Worship Ministry Practice
- 8:15 - 9:00- Worship Ministry Practice

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

- 9:45 am - Sunday School
- 11:00 am - Worship Service
- 6:00 pm - Smyrna U classes



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MISSION STATEMENT

Smyrna Baptist Church exists for the purpose of building up a community of fully equipped believers who give glory to God with every aspect of their lives.

APRIL 2026 - Children's volunteer schedule

DATE	9:30 - 10:45		10:45 - 12:15				
	CHECK-IN DESK	NURSERY	CHECK-IN DESK	NURSERY	1'S & 2'S	3'S	CHILDREN'S CHURCH
5 th	Angie Adkins		Chuck Page	Sariah Williamson	Scotty & Heather Leshner	Janna Cobb & Candi Cornett	Nikki Russel
12 th	Audrey Erdmann	Gina Perkinson	Chuck Johnson	Brandy Barchanowicz		Chris & Brooke Dimaio	Derrick & Carla Temple
19 th	Kim Davis	Alicia Dalton & Sharon Long	Kim Davis	Leah Pierce	Kyle & Alyssa Pitcock	Frankie Lunsford	Drew & Kristen Berry
26 th		Catherine Parson	Megan Wells	Melissa Snellings		Marisol & Amanda Joyner	Brittney Chappell & Alyssa Long

EASTER SUNDAY
schedule
APRIL 5

- 6:45 AM | Sunrise Service in the Pavilion
- 7:30 AM | Light Breakfast in the gym
- 9:45 AM | Sunday School hour
- 11:00 AM | Sunday morning worship

NO EVENING ACTIVITIES | Monday, APRIL 6 - Office Closed



SS Class Dinner Schedule

- ◇ 1st - No evening activities - Spring Break
- ◇ 8th - Generations & Aging Gracefully
- ◇ 15th - Middle School Youth - Business Meeting following dinner - no other activities
- ◇ 22nd - Parents R Us
- ◇ 29th - Melting Pot